

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the Meeting of the
Council of the Borough
held at 7.00 pm on 11 December 2023

Present:

**The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Mike Botting**

**The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Keith Onslow**

Councillors

Jeremy Adams	Dr Sunil Gupta	Angela Page
Jonathan Andrews	FRCP FRCPATH	Chris Price
Jessica Arnold	Christine Harris	Chloe-Jane Ross
Felicity Bainbridge	Colin Hitchins	Will Rowlands
Kathy Bance MBE	Alisa Igoe	Shaun Slator
Yvonne Bear	Julie Ireland	Colin Smith
Nicholas Bennett J.P.	Mike Jack	Diane Smith
Kim Botting FRSA	Simon Jeal	Mark Smith
Mark Brock	David Jefferys	Alison Stammers
David Cartwright QFSM	Charles Joel	Melanie Stevens
Graeme Casey	Kevin Kennedy-Brooks	Harry Stranger
Josh Coldspring-White	Josh King	Michael Tickner
Aisha Cuthbert	Kate Lymer	Pauline Tunnicliffe
Peter Dean	Tony Owen	Sam Webber
Sophie Dunbar	Christopher Marlow	Rebecca Wiffen
Robert Evans	Ruth McGregor	
Kira Gabbert	Tony McPartlan	
Hannah Gray	Alexa Michael	

The meeting was opened with prayers

In the Chair
The Mayor
Councillor Mike Botting

34 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Will Connolly, Simon Fawthrop, Adam Grant, Jonathan Laidlaw, Ryan Thomson and Thomas Turrell.

35 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Simon Jeal declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 37 (Petition) as a trustee of XbyX, and stated that he would not speak or vote on the matter.

36 To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 October 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2023 be confirmed.

37 Petition
Report CSD23145

The following petition had been received by the Council –

“We, the undersigned, object to the proposed demolition of Lewis House and the displacement or closure of the service it provides.”

The lead petitioner, Mr Garnet Frost, attended the meeting and addressed the meeting in support of his petition.

A motion to take no further action on the petition was moved by Councillor Colin Smith, seconded by Cllr Kate Lymer and **CARRIED**.

(Councillor Simon Jeal abstained – recorded at his request).

38 Questions

Two questions had been received from members of the public for oral reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

Four questions had been received from members of the public for written reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix B to these minutes.

Ten questions had been received from members of the Council for oral reply. The questions, with the replies given, are set out in Appendix C to these minutes.

Five questions had been received from members of the Council for written reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix D to these minutes.

39 To consider any statements that may be made by the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holders or Chairmen of Committees.

A statement had been requested by Cllrs Julie Ireland and Sam Webber from Cllr Nicholas Bennett, the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road

Safety on the effect of the forced use of the RingGo parking app, and what evidence he would take into account when he reviewed the scheme.

The Portfolio Holder stated that he would not be making a statement as there would be a report to the PDS Committee in January. Questioned by Cllr Alison Stammers about fall in parking income since the introduction of the app, the Portfolio Holder repeated that she would have to wait for the report.

Cllr Chloe-Jane Ross asked whether, in view of the reported destruction of ULEZ cameras, he was concerned about RingGo being targeted? Cllr Bennett responded that he condemned the criminal damage to ULEZ cameras and hoped that the perpetrators would be caught.

Cllr Webber added that he hoped that the Council would take into account people's personal circumstances and the outages suffered by the app.

40 Capital Programme Monitoring Quarter 2 2023/24
Report CSD23151

A motion to approve the following amendments to the Capital Programme -
(i) increase of £3,000k for surveys and potential remedial works in relation to reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC);
(ii) increase of £1,893k in relation to depots; and
(iii) increase of £700k in relation to increased costs on the social care case management system;
was moved by Councillor Christopher Marlow, seconded by Cllr Yvonne Bear and **CARRIED**.

41 Treasury Management Quarter 2 Performance 2023/24 and Mid-Year Review
Report CSD23152

A motion to note the treasury management performance for the second quarter of 2023/24 and approve the prudential indicators set out in Appendix 4 to the report was moved by Cllr Christopher Marlow, seconded by Cllr Colin Smith and **CARRIED**.

42 Review of the Constitution
Report CSD23144

A motion to approve the new layout and updated contents of the Constitution, as at Appendix 1 to the report, was moved by Cllr Nicholas Bennett, seconded by Cllr Pauline Tunnicliffe, and **CARRIED**.

**43 Development Control Committee and Plans Sub-Committees -
Terms of Reference**
Report CSD23148

A motion to approve the updated terms of reference of Development Control Committee and Plans Sub-Committees was moved by Cllr Nicholas Bennett, seconded by Cllr Alexa Michael and **CARRIED**.

44 Committee Appointments
Report CSD23149

A motion proposing that Cllr Josh Coldspring-White be appointed to the vacant committee seats was moved by Cllr Pauline Tunnicliffe, seconded by Cllr Colin Hitchins and **CARRIED**.

(Note: The vacant seats were on Environment & Community Services PDS Committee, Public Protection and Enforcement PDS Committee, Renewal, Recreation & Housing PDS Committee, Development Control Committee, General Purposes and Licensing Committee, Pensions Committee and Standards Committee.)

45 SACRE Annual Report 2022/23
Report CSD23143

A motion to receive and note the SACRE Annual Report for 2022/23 was moved by Cllr David Jefferys, seconded by Cllr Jonathan Andrews and **CARRIED**.

46 To consider Motions of which notice has been given.

(A) Care Experienced People

The following motion was moved by Cllr Ruth McGregor and seconded by Councillor Rebecca Wiffen:

“Council notes that:

- Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives;
- Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;
- Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships employment and in the criminal justice system;
- The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics;
- The Independent Review into Children’s Social Care published its report in May 2022 and recommends that the government should make care experience a protected characteristic

Council resolves:

- That this council will treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic so that future services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who formally share a Protected Characteristic;
- To formally call upon all other bodies including government to treat care experience as a Protected Characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation;
- For the Council to continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views.”

On being put to the vote, the motion was **LOST**.

(B) Prostate Cancer

The following motion was moved by Cllr Chris Price and seconded by Cllr Sophie Dunbar:

“This Council notes;

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men.

1 in 8 men will be diagnosed, rising to 1 in 4 for Black men.

As many as 69% of those treated with surgery may experience urinary incontinence as a result.

1 in 25 men aged over 40 will experience some form of urinary leakage every year.

1 in 20 men aged 60 or over will experience bowel incontinence in the UK.

Men who need to dispose of their sanitary waste (including incontinence pads, pouches, stoma, catheter, colostomy, ileostomy waste by-products) often have no direct access to a sanitary bin in male toilets.

Bromley Council resolves:

To ask the executive member for Environment to investigate providing at least one sanitary bin in all Council operated and contracted male public toilets.

To encourage other providers of public and workplace toilets in the borough to make male sanitary bins available in their facilities.

That the Leader should write to our 4 local MP’s to encourage for Government to update any necessary regulations to ensure that ‘suitable means for the disposal of sanitary dressings’ is provided in all toilets, in alignment with the Prostate Cancer ‘Boys need Bins’ campaign.”

Council
11 December 2023

The following members voted in favour of the motion:

Councillors Jeremy Adams, Jessica Arnold, Kathy Bance, Graeme Casey, Sophie Dunbar, Robert Evans, Alisa Igoe, Julie Ireland, Mike Jack, Simon Jeal, Charles Joel, Kevin Kennedy-Brooks, Josh King, Ruth McGregor, Tony McPartlan, Chris Price, Chloe-Jane Ross, Shaun Slator, Mark Smith, Alison Stammers, Melanie Stevens, Harry Stranger, Sam Webber and Rebecca Wiffen (24).

The following members voted against the motion:

Councillors Jonathan Andrews, Felicity Bainbridge, Yvonne Bear, Nicholas Bennett, Kim Botting, Mark Brock, David Cartwright, Josh Coldspring-White, Aisha Cuthbert, Peter Dean, Kira Gabbert, Hannah Gray, Sunil Gupta, Christine Harris, Colin Hitchins, David Jefferys, Kate Lymer, Christopher Marlow, Alexa Michael, Tony Owen, Angela Page, Will Rowlands, Colin Smith, Diane Smith, Michael Tickner and Pauline Tunnicliffe (26)

The following members abstained:

Councillors Mike Botting and Keith Onslow (2).

The motion was **LOST**.

47 The Mayor's announcements and communications.

The Mayor thanked Members who attended the Ball at The Warren and the dinner at Tamasha, and reminded Members about the following events –

- The Carol Service and Nine Lessons on Sunday 17th December 2023 at All Saints Church in Orpington;
- Sunday Lunch at The Warren on 21st January 2024 – all funds to the Rotary Club of Bromley for supporting Ukraine;
- Commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day on Wednesday 31st January at the Civic Centre;
- A wine tasting conducted by Cllr David Cartwright on Saturday 16th March 2024 in the Old Palace;
- Dinner at the East India Club on Thursday 11th April 2024.

The Meeting ended at 9.08 pm

Mayor

Council

11 December 2023

Questions from Members of the Public for Oral Reply

1. From Dermot Mckibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

Please list the annual energy bill for each of the Council owned leisure centres, what plans are there to reduce the energy bills at these buildings, does the Council accept responsibility to make all these buildings completely climate change friendly and if not, why not?

Reply:

The energy bills for the leisure centres are paid for by Mytime Active who are consequently motivated to maximise energy efficiency to reduce costs and are currently investigating options for renewable energy provision, specifically at Beckenham Spa. The major works planned for the Walnuts and West Wickham leisure centres also include improvements to energy efficiency and a bid has been submitted for a grant to fund this.

Supplementary Question:

Mr Mckibbin asked whether the Portfolio Holder could speak to Mytime to investigate the slow progress at The Spa.

Reply:

Cllr Bear agreed to contact Mytime.

2. From Ju Owens to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

With the winter weather starting to bite, and the cost of living crisis increasing what provisions has Bromley Council put in place to ensure that no one is forced to sleep rough this winter; and that everyone found homeless is helped to find to secure and affordable housing?

Reply:

The Council works with partner agencies throughout the year to identify and engage with anyone found to be sleeping rough in the borough. The support provided includes access to accommodation, support with health matters and referrals to appropriate agencies. This proactive work throughout the year means that the numbers of people sleeping rough in the borough remain low and that new flow to the streets is responded to very quickly.

Supplementary Question:

Ms Owens asked whether the Council would be joining other councils, charities, businesses, community and faith groups in joining the Mayor of London's Rough Sleeping Charter?

Reply:

Cllr Bear responded that the Council would do its best to address rough sleeping with or without a charter and was making good progress. At the last survey, only one Bromley resident was found to be sleeping rough who was not previously known to services. The Charter had been created in collaboration with London Councils, reflects best practice across all London Boroughs and encourages other organisations to assist with tackling rough sleeping. The Council will review the Charter.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Jeal:

Cllr Jeal asked how the monitoring and identification of rough sleepers worked – how this was counted and quantified?

Reply:

Cllr Bear explained that the number of rough sleepers was regularly monitored and as soon as a report of a new rough sleeper was received the outreach team was sent to investigate. Five people had been found sleeping rough at the last survey.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

Cllr Igoe complained that she had emailed about a rough sleeper, but had not received a reply.

Reply:

Cllr Bear asked for the details to be sent to her and she would follow up. She added that usually a team was sent out the same night, but sometimes it was not possible to find the person.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Kathy Bance:

Cllr Bance asked where rough sleepers should be reported?

Reply:

Cllr Bear advised that reports should always be made to the Council's rough sleeper team, who could then refer to other agencies as appropriate.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Sam Webber:

Cllr Webber asked what support for rough sleepers was available at weekends?

Reply:

Cllr Bear explained that the outreach team worked 24/7 and every day of the year. Even where the Council did not have a duty of care the team would always try to assist and support as far as possible.

Council

11 December 2023

Questions from Members of the Public for Written Reply

1. From Fiona Brandhorst to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

Will LBB introduce council tax exemption for care leavers up to 25, and those who move to Bromley from other areas, as called for by The Children's Society? As the corporate parent to these young people, can you provide them with a fairer start into adulthood and protection from debt?

Reply:

We continue to support our Care Leavers in a number of other ways which have been previously outlined. The recent Ofsted inspection was satisfied with the ways in which we support our young people as they move into independence.

2. From Kyle Sewell to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Would the Portfolio Holder say that, whilst crossing at the Homesdale Road roundabout, pedestrians experience near misses with speeding cars because their parents haven't told them how to cross the road properly?

Reply:

All road users should take care when using roundabouts or indeed any road.

3. From Susan Sulis to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

A question to the 16/11/23 ECS PDS Committee asking for dates and locations of surface water flooding in the Crays in 2021 elicited a response detailing only those on 20 October 2021. Serious flooding also took place on 20 July 2021.

Please detail all other flooding locations and dates for 2021.

Reply:

The significant storms in 2021 that resulted in flooding to SMC occurred on 20th July and 20th October.

As a result of the 20th of July storm flooding was reported at -

- Station Road, St Mary Cray
- Leasons Hill, St Mary Cray
- Kynaston Road, Orpington
- Repton Road, Orpington

4. From Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

Please provide the balance in each Earmarked Reserve as of 30 September 2023, showing the following information:- The date the reserve was created and the initial amount, the value and date of the most recent deposit and the value and date of the most recent withdrawal. Please sort the table by current balance.

Reply:

(See attached appendix)

EARMARKED RESERVES BALANCES AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023

Description	Balance at 30/09/23 £'000	First contribution date	First contribution amount £'000	Last contribution date	Last contribution amount £'000	Last drawdown date	Last drawdown amount £'000
Collection Fund Surplus Set Aside	37,155	15/04/2014	2,964	31/03/2022	16,822	31/03/2023	1,700
Growth Fund	21,061	14/01/2015	10,000	31/03/2020	1,425	31/03/2023	178
Housing Investment Fund	20,894	28/03/2019	7,500	31/03/2023	17	31/03/2023	6,536
Invest to Save	18,275	09/11/2011	14,000	31/03/2023	400	31/03/2023	637
Financial Planning & Risk Reserve	10,000	31/03/2015	5,000	31/03/2018	5,000		
Income Equalisation Reserve	9,030	31/03/2018	1,086	31/03/2023	2,044		
Government Grants	8,481	31/03/2011	884	31/03/2023	8,092	31/03/2023	8,481
COVID recovery Fund	8,443	31/03/2021	10,273	31/03/2022	2,771	31/03/2023	4,600
Investment Fund	6,146	31/03/2013	20,693	31/03/2023	16	31/03/2022	13
Various Joint Schemes and Pump Priming Investments	5,091	31/03/2016	3,100	31/03/2023	77	31/03/2022	501
Hospital Discharge Funding	5,031	26/02/2021	1,677	31/03/2023	1,677		
Utilisation of New Homes Bonus	4,829	31/03/2012	993	31/03/2023	253	31/03/2019	0
Business Rates Risk Reserve	4,200	31/03/2015	1,200	31/03/2016	3,000		
Insurance Fund	3,970	30/04/2016	3,099	31/03/2022	540	31/03/2022	922
Health & Social Care 'Promise Programme'	3,953	31/03/2012	4,995	31/03/2012	4,995	22/03/2017	2,000
Housing Invest to Save	3,409	31/03/2019	3,409	31/03/2019	3,409		
Parallel Fund	3,097	12/01/2015	2,700	31/03/2023	77	31/03/2017	109
Schools	3,071	31/03/2005	9,014	31/03/2023	3,803	31/03/2023	3,541
Health & Social Care Integrated Commissioning Fund	3,030	31/03/2015	4,553	31/03/2019	2,000	14/12/2020	520
Transition Fund	2,559	04/05/2016	2,068	23/01/2018	2,052	05/03/2019	30
Collection Fund Deferred Costs Reserve	2,283	31/03/2021	2,662	31/03/2022	2,283	31/03/2023	2,662
Winter Pressures	2,010	04/03/2014	1,542	31/03/2017	468	05/03/2014	1,542
Building Infrastructure Fund	2,000	31/03/2023	2,000	31/03/2023	2,000		
Healthy Bromley Fund	1,899	31/03/2014	2,670	31/03/2015	1,250	31/03/2023	1,117
Future Pensions Risk on Outsourcing	1,729	31/03/2018	203	31/03/2023	247	15/11/2022	9
Key Health & Social Care Initiatives	1,700	31/03/2014	1,700	31/03/2014	1,700		
Social Care Staffing Fund	1,700	31/03/2023	1,700	31/03/2023	1,700		
Integration of Health & Social Care Initiatives	1,614	31/03/2014	4,067	27/07/2018	750	19/12/2017	800
Health & Social Care Transformation Fund	1,500	27/02/2020	1,500	27/02/2020	1,500		
Capital Fund	1,252	31/03/2022	2,900	31/03/2022	2,900	31/03/2023	2,630
Technology Fund	1,229	31/03/2005	1,325	31/03/2023	31	31/03/2022	100
Transformation Fund	1,224	31/03/2009	500	31/03/2022	93	31/03/2022	93
Tremendous Fund	1,161	31/03/2023	595	31/03/2023	595		
Health Facilities Fund	993	27/02/2020	993	27/02/2020	993		
Carbon Neutral Initiatives Fund	875	31/03/2021	875	31/03/2021	875		
Platinum Jubilee Fund	854	31/03/2022	1,000	31/03/2022	1,000	31/03/2023	146
Bromley Welfare Fund	753	31/03/2015	970	31/03/2022	600	31/03/2023	179
One off Member Initiatives	654	31/03/2012	2,620	31/03/2023	3	31/03/2023	30
Legal Fund	635	31/03/2023	635	31/03/2023	635		
Education Fund	630	31/03/2023	630	31/03/2023	630		
West Wickham Leisure Centre & Library Redevelopment	623	22/03/2018	993	22/03/2018	993	31/03/2021	1
Payment in Lieu Reserve for Temporary Accommodation	536	31/03/2015	23	31/03/2023	166		
Environmental Initiatives	425	06/03/2017	500	31/03/2020	33	31/03/2023	3
Infrastructure Investment Fund	412	17/04/2012	4,463	31/03/2019	1,106	31/03/2022	147
Arboriculture Backlog Fund	400	31/03/2023	400	31/03/2023	400		
IT Procurement Fund	336	31/03/2023	336	31/03/2023	336		
Transformation Programme	250	28/03/2019	500	28/03/2019	500	31/03/2022	93
Investment to Community	228	24/02/2010	250	31/03/2020	1	31/05/2023	1
Loneliness Strategy Fund	149	31/03/2023	296	31/03/2023	296	31/03/2023	147
Professional Advice for Future Schemes	122	31/03/2017	147	31/03/2017	147	31/03/2022	10
High Street & Parks Improvement Fund	71	28/03/2019	115	28/03/2019	115	31/03/2020	44
Housing feasibility and viability	36	31/03/2020	250	31/03/2022	477	31/03/2023	72
Planning Services Charging Account	-155	31/03/2011	75	31/03/2021	511	31/03/2022	70
DSG Adjustment Account (unusable reserve)	-12,706					31/03/2023	5,563

Notes:

1. Detailed financial records are not held prior to 1st April 2005. Any contributions listed above with a date of 31st March 2005 are therefore the total balances carried forward at that date.

2. The majority of earmarked reserve transactions are actioned whilst closing the accounts and therefore have a date of 31st March for transactions in the preceding financial year.

3. The Provisional Final Accounts report to the Executive on 5th July 2023 provides details on the projected future utilisation of these reserves (para 12.3). In particular, planned commitments will reduce the total balance to £108.2m as at 31st March 2026, and specific monies for health, schools, insurance and government grants reduce that to £81.1m. If reserves are required to meet the budget deficit reported to Executive in February 2023, and if the DSG deficit continues, then the projected remaining balance is £30.2m.

This page is left intentionally blank

Council

11 December 2023

Questions from Members of the Council for Oral Reply

1. From Cllr Chloe-Jane Ross to the Portfolio Holder for Environment

What action is the Council taking to reduce light pollution and promote dark skies (is there a policy) and what enforcement occurs to deal with excessive light complaints?

Reply:

The Council does not have a Dark Skies Policy however Light pollution (excessive glare) may, under some circumstances, be assessed as a statutory nuisance and thus resolved using shielding, timers, negotiation, or enforcement using S.79 & 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Supplementary Question:

Cllr Ross asked whether, in view of the large proportion of the borough that was rural in nature, the Council could consider developing a policy?

Reply:

Cllr Rowlands responded that the Council did have relevant policies – he read an extract from Policy 122 Light Pollution in the Local Plan. The issue could be looked at, but there was also a balance to be found with safety requirements relating to the prevention of crime and road safety.

Cllr Simon Jeal added a comment agreeing that the desire for dark skies did need to be balanced with the need for safety.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Graeme Casey:

Cllr Casey asked about enforcement in relation to a tennis club's floodlights in his ward.

Reply:

Cllr Rowlands asked that the specific details be passed to him. Some of the issues related to planning restrictions – he gave the example of the Lidl supermarket in his ward.

2. From Cllr Tony McPartlan to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

What plans do we have to bid for funding from the Mayor of London's new Council Homes Acquisition Programme?

Reply:

Officers have already met with the GLA to discuss the programme and ensure a full understanding of how it might help Bromley. Officers are now assessing the merits

further of how this funding could support Bromley's plans with a view to being ready to progress a submission when the CHAPs programme opens to bids.

3. From Cllr Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Roads Safety

Reference: Environment PDS Committee 16 November, Item 13, page 221: "The first part of 2023 has not been good in terms of serious collisions".

The paper and Appendix show a high projection of 122 KSIs (People Killed & Seriously Injured in Road Traffic Collisions) against a "target" of 79 KSIs on Bromley roads, for 2023/24.

Previous years:

Actual	Target	Year
103	79	2022/23
109	86	2021/22
77	92	2020/21 Pandemic year

Of the actual 61 KSIs so far this year up to June 2023, how many of the drivers involved in these collisions were aged 17-24 years old?

Reply:
Nine.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Jeal:

Cllr Jeal asked about the road safety scheme for young drivers.

Reply:

Cllr Bennett confirmed that this was the Driven by Consequences event held at Langley Park on 7th July. The event had been very successful and he hoped that it could be repeated next year.

Cllr Webber thanked the Portfolio Holder for his engagement with road safety issues in Holmesdale Road. Traffic and pedestrian surveys were underway, and he hoped these would lead to further road safety improvements.

4. From Cllr Julie Ireland to the Leader of the Council

Residents across Bromley Borough and particularly some in Bromley Town are reporting receiving post only two or three times a month. This is particularly important as Christmas approaches but also affects official time critical correspondence, such as parking tickets that arrive too late to qualify for the discounted period. What steps has the Council Leader taken to liaise with Royal Mail to highlight the particular problems in Bromley and what mitigation can he put in place for people who suffer a financial penalty caused by post arriving late?

Reply:

As I advised Cllr Casey in response to a similar question in this Chamber on the 17th July, when I believe you were present too.

"I can do better than that for you. Having written to the CEO of the Royal Mail on two occasions myself as long ago as January 2021, only to be completely ignored, enquiries of this nature for Bromley & Chislehurst residents were streamlined and are being pursued directly by Sir Bob Neill and his team at Westminster. Sir Bob is in regular correspondence with Royal Mail as delays are reported, has visited Sherman Road sorting office and held talks on site there with senior Royal Mail Managers, as well as meeting local postmen and women and Trade Union representatives, explaining directly the impacts that these delays have on local residents and businesses. With that in mind, you might find it helpful to steer any of your constituents who approach you complaining of delays directly to his office."

There is unfortunately no mitigation that I can think of in general terms that the Council can put in place to compensate for the Post Office's ongoing inability to do their job properly.

In the specific instance of a Parking Ticket, I would suggest without prejudice that appealing to the Council's parking team on that basis might be considered sympathetically, certainly for a first-time offender.

In summary. Sir Bob Neill remains in correspondence with both the Secretary of State for Business and Trade and Ofcom on related matters, in an effort to improve the situation for all concerned.

Supplementary Question:

Cllr Ireland stated that she was grateful to Sir Bob Neill MP for his efforts on this issue; there had been some improvements, but performance had slipped again. She was aware that this was not within the Council's control, but she urged that the matter be raised again.

Reply:

Cllr Smith assured Members that the issue was being pursued through Sir Bob Neill, who had referred the matter to Ofcom.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Tony McPartlan:

Cllr Tony McPartlan urged that a cross party letter from all Members be drawn up to put pressure on Royal Mail.

Reply:

Cllr Smith stated that he would be happy to support a letter from all group leaders.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Mike Jack:

Cllr Mike Jack commented that residents and businesses were going to the depot at Sherman Road to collect their mail. However, the opening hours had now been reduced. He asked the Leader if there was anything that the Council could do to encourage them to stay open longer?

Reply:

Cllr Smith responded that if fellow group leaders wanted to send a letter this issue could be included.

Cllr Graeme Casey added that the letter would need to be hand-delivered.

5. From Cllr Jeremy Adams to the Portfolio holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

The Chancellor announced in the Autumn Statement that local authorities will be able to claim back the costs of processing major business planning applications on the condition they meet faster timelines. Based on current planning application flows and staffing, how well-equipped is Bromley Council to meet accelerated timelines and regain costs?

Reply:

At present the Local Planning Authority is performing well and meeting all of its statutory performance targets so is well placed with regards to the upcoming changes. The resourcing requirements of any enhanced service together with the ability of third-party consultees to respond in reduced timescales will need to be assessed to determine whether any increased fees are achievable and economically viable.

6. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Can the Portfolio Holder request an update from the Metropolitan Gangs Unit on its work and achievements in Bromley?

Reply:

In direct response to your question, the Gangs Unit has not been active in Bromley due to there being no identified gangs at the current time.

However, what has happened is that the South Area Gangs Unit was replaced on the 4th December by an Offender Management Team which is part of the move to put more resource under local rather than Met wide control.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Bance commented that there appeared to be less violent crime in Penge, but that there were still issues further out in Beckenham and Bromley.

Reply:

Cllr Page re-stated that there were no gangs operating in the borough, but there were sometimes problems stemming from the surrounding areas. She would be happy to provide the information she had to Cllr Bance.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Kevin Kennedy-Brooks:

Councillor Kevin Kennedy-Brooks asked what had suddenly changed, that there were no longer any gangs operating in Bromley?

Reply:

Cllr Page responded that she would ask the Police for information on this.

7. From Cllr Chris Price to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

The introduction of the Mayor of London's Free School Meals for primary schools this term has helped many families during the cost-of-living crisis. Please can you update the chamber on the take up rate in schools and of the actions that Bromley has taken to promote the scheme.

Reply:

Under the GLA's scheme, the Council does not receive details of uptake. The Department has sent all GLA communications of the scheme on to schools. It is for schools to administer and share details of the scheme as they see fit.

Supplementary Question:

Cllr Price asked whether it would be possible for the Council to obtain the figures from the GLA? He believed that this was a great scheme, and he asked what the Council was doing to promote it – there appeared to be nothing on the Council's website?

Reply:

Cllr Lymer stated that she would pass on take-up rate if she could obtain it. Officers had been instructed not to spend time and money on behalf of the Mayor of London.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

Cllr Alisa Igoe referred to comments in the press that the scheme might be ending – she asked whether the Portfolio Holder had any information on this?

Reply:

Cllr Lymer responded that she would ask.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Kevin Kennedy-Brooks:

Cllr Kennedy-Brooks asked whether the scheme had been promoted on the Council website, and if the Council did not have authority for this scheme, what was commonly done to promote free school meals?

Reply:

Cllr Lymer responded that there was information about free school meals on the website.

Comment from Cllr Michael Tickner:

Cllr Tickner commented that there was no such thing as a free school meal – other taxpayers were subsidising this. This was taxpayers money that some could ill-afford.

Comment from Cllr Colin Smith:

Cllr Smith commented that when the scheme had been debated previously there had been genuine views expressed by members on both sides. He asked whether the

Portfolio Holder agreed that it was not fair that parents from poorer areas to be funding meals for children from wealthier areas?

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that she did not think that the programme was fair.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Tony Owen:

Cllr Owen asked whether the Portfolio Holder had any information about how long the scheme would last?

Reply:

Cllr Lymer responded that free school meals were just funded for this year to align with the GLA election in 2024.

8. From Cllr Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Does the Portfolio Holder expect The Hill Car Park to re-open and if so when? What efforts have been made to let visitors know about alternative late night parking locations in this important trading period for the entertainment and hospitality sector?

Reply:

Posters have been placed at The Hill site to direct customers to other nearby carparks, and there is information on the Council's website. I am delighted to announce that we should be able to re-open The Hill next week.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

Cllr Igoe reported that one lane had been closed going into the Stockwell car park.

Reply:

The Portfolio Holder replied that he would look into this.

9. From Cllr Chris Price to the Leader of the Council

Does the Leader agree that following the Home Secretary allegedly using derogatory language about an area in another MP's Constituency, that members of this chamber should not use derogatory language when referring to areas of this Borough, when in the chamber?

Reply:

I understand that the Home Secretary subsequently apologised for using derogatory language about a Labour MP.

I hope that elected Members in Bromley try and talk our Borough up at all times, whether inside this Chamber or otherwise.

Supplementary Question:

Cllr Price asked what action the Leader would take if a Member behaved like this?

Reply:

The Leader stated that he would ask to see the evidence, then make a proportionate judgement based on the facts.

10. From Cllr Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Did Bromley send any personnel to The Transport & Energy Forum held in Birmingham 16/11/23? The theme - the need to accelerate the transition to decarbonisation. Invitees included transport planners, technology innovators for EV charging, and local authorities were offered fully funded places. Sessions included the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund, from which London has received a total of £35million in capital funding plus £3million in capability funding, and insight on collaborating with charge point operators.

Reply:

No.

Supplementary Question:

Cllr Igoe asked whether this approach was ambitious enough to hit the Council's net zero targets?

Reply:

The Portfolio Holder responded that it would have cost £1,100 to send someone, when they could connect online over Teams with little cost. With a budget deficit projected it was not right to suggest spending more money.

This page is left intentionally blank

Council

11 December 2023

Questions from Members of the Council for Written Reply

1. From Cllr Tony McPartlan to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

Please detail the number of households on Bromley's Housing Register split out by ward and band.

Reply:

Wards	Emergency Band -	Band 1 -	Band 2 -	Band 3 -	Band 4 -	Grand Total
Beckenham Town & Copers						
Cope	1	39	17	40	6	103
Bickley & Sundridge		25	19	11	9	64
Biggin Hill	1	12	14	9	2	38
Bromley Common & Holwood	1	47	28	45	7	128
Bromley Town		30	29	15	9	83
Chelsfield	1	14	4	6	1	26
Chislehurst	1	14	5	16		36
Clock House	1	30	16	30	8	85
Crystal Palace & Anerley	3	78	25	52	6	164
Darwin		5	3	3		11
Farnborough & Crofton		12	4	5	2	23
Hayes & Coney Hall	1	8	6	5	1	21
Kelsey & Eden Park	1	19	7	12	3	42
Mottingham	1	54	17	57	5	134
Orpington	1	56	62	45	12	176
Penge & Cator	6	92	47	96	16	257
Petts Wood & Knoll		17	4	17	3	41
Plaistow		35	24	39	3	101
Shortlands & Park Langley		13	3	16	3	35
St Mary Cray	5	86	60	57	15	223
St Paul's Cray	4	93	81	97	19	294
West Wickham		6	3	4	2	15
OOB	4	85	821	27	84	1021
Grand Total	32	870	1299	704	216	3121

Please note this data captures the household's current address. If they are in temporary accommodation this will reflect the placement address rather than the address and ward which they became homeless from.

2. From Cllr Mark Smith to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act received Royal Assent in November.

One of the provisions in the Act is to enable retailers, currently using parking space in front of their premises for temporary seating, to now make this permanent.

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm the proposed timescales for this facility to be made available in the borough?

Reply:

During the Pandemic we allowed the temporary use of some parking bays for pavement licences although the Business and Planning Act 2020 is clear that areas of the Highway, not officially designated as pavement, cannot be licenced under the Pavement Licensing Regime. This can only occur if the areas of highway or parking bays have been formally re-designated as pavement.

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 identifies a new permanent provision for a Pavement Licensing regime. The commencement of the new provisions will be provided for by regulations – which are yet to be published. We are also awaiting the Guidance so it is not possible to ascertain whether parking bays will be excluded from the new permanent regime, as they are in the current temporary one, or not.

The current temporary pavement licensing scheme is in place until Sept 2024. We anticipate formalisation of the new permanent pavement licensing regulations before then.

3. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Can the Portfolio Holder provide an update on the Prevent Project in relation to healthy relationships being rolled out to our Bromley Schools?

Reply:

We are not aware of any specific PREVENT project being delivered to schools in Bromley. There is the Healthy London Healthy Relationships (HLHR) which is funded by London Councils and promotes healthy relationships and preventing gender-based violence in London schools. It does not include the PREVENT programme.

4. From Cllr Sam Webber to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Would the Transport Portfolio Holder consider these following suggestions from concerned residents in Palace View and Bishops Avenue in Bromley Town ward?

- Installing Zig Zag lines on Bishops Avenue (on the Widmore Road - Mason's Hill rat run) at the rear entrance to Bickley and La Fontaine Primary Schools for the safety of the children, parents and carers. This is a fast down-hill residential road with the footpath off it serving both schools.
- Consider installing a traffic island or traffic calming measure close to the blind downhill right-hand bend at the corner of Bishops Avenue and Palace View.

Reply:

The road and footways outside this particular entrance to Bickley Primary and La Fontaine Primary Schools has been investigated by traffic engineers on a number of occasions in recent years. Zigzag lines were considered, but as these could not be installed on both sides of the street to cover both arms of the footpaths, instead double yellow lines with No Loading restrictions were introduced instead. This was considered a better arrangement by the engineers. In addition, a part time flashing 20mph sign was installed on the southbound approach to this entrance.

In respect to the very tight bend to the south of the entrance in question, the bend was considered to be a traffic calming feature in itself. A traffic island here might encourage crossing at an inappropriate location.

5. From Cllr Sam Webber to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Would the Portfolio Holder and Transport Officers consider a review of parking restrictions in Coniston Road around the Bromley Court Hotel?

Residents have been complaining about a number of large vans and small lorries which are permanently parked in this road and about which nothing can be done currently, due to a lack of parking restrictions.

Reply:

Any parking controls would prevent parking by cars and would in any case simply displace the parked vans and small lorries to another, possibly less suitable location.

This page is left intentionally blank